



*Department of Resources and  
Economic Development*



**Hampton Beach Area Commission  
100 Winnacunnet Road  
Hampton, New Hampshire 03842  
Selectmen's Meeting Room – Town Hall  
Monthly Meeting – September 24, 2015  
7:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**In Attendance:**

John Nyhan, Chairman, Town of Hampton Representative  
Fran McMahon, Rockingham Planning Commission  
Bob Preston, Hampton Chamber of Commerce  
Bill Watson, Vice Chairman-NH Department of Transportation  
Chuck Rage, Hampton Beach Village District  
Rick Griffin, Town of Hampton Representative  
Dean Merrill, Citizen at Large  
Michael Housman, Operations Supervisor, DRED (Seacoast Parks/Recreation)  
Rich Reniere, Hampton Beach Village District

**Excused:** 0

**Absent:** 0

**Other:** Anne Marchand, Secretary

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Introduction of Commissioners.**

**Public Comments related to Agenda Items:** No comments this evening.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** Taken out of order.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Mr. Houseman to approve the Minutes of the May 21, 2015 Meeting, as presented.

**SECOND:** Mr. Preston

**VOTE:** 9 in Favor 0 Opposed

**MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Mr. Rage to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting on June 11, 2015 as presented.

**SECOND:** Mr. Griffin

**VOTE:** 9 In Favor, 0 Opposed.

**MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Mr. Merrill to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting July 24, 2015 as presented.

**SECOND:** Mr Griffin

**VOTE:** 9 In Favor 0 Opposed.

**MOTION PASSED**

#### **APPOINTMENT.**

##### **Gordon Leedy/ NHDOT re Transportation Grant – Reports related to Public Hearing in June**

Mr. Leedy thanked the Commission for the opportunity to come and preview what has been done over the summer including an analysis of traffic patterns and public outreach; the 2001 Master Plan and the number of recommendations as well as the reconstruction of the bridge over the Hampton River; the reconstruction of Ocean Boulevard to one lane, north; reconstruction of Ashworth; one way circulation on side streets (which has been completed); and the reconstruction of the intersections at beach gateways, Church St., etc.

There are also recommendations for traffic signals at the State Park driveway, Ashworth/Ocean Boulevard, with four signals on Ashworth Avenue; and, pedestrian crossing areas on Ocean Boulevard. Also to provide a remote parking facility with shuttle service to the beach.

He stated that he went through the suggestions and, with the small groups set up at the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, recommendations were made which were looked into in greater detail.

**NOTE:** The memos from Mr. Leedy to Mr. Rose dated September 9, 2015 and from Nicholas Sanders, Senior Traffic Engineer (VHB) dated September 10, 2015 provided to the Commission have additional information and detail included in Mr Leedy's presentation this evening.

Supported by Power Point, Mr. Leedy stated that issues included sidewalk/pedestrian accommodations on Ocean Boulevard; parking availability, way finding/direction signals; general traffic congestion (particularly exiting the beach) and deficiencies with the Hampton Harbor Bridge.

He reported there has been activity on Face Book with comments including a trolley along the beach, transit service from Salisbury to Rye, parking garages, signalization of Church Street crosswalks, and bike accommodations. There were @ 120 followers of Facebook and there were several good comments posted. The general comments were as noted above.

On the Facebook site, three out of four were visitors, then it moved to local residents participating. The vast majority of people said they drive and most of the people were residents of the beach or Hampton. People said they would not pay more to park, some said no trolley, which others said "yes" to a free trolley. Many said they would use an "app" to find parking and would be willing to park in a parking garage.

With regard to biking, many said they bike and there were more “no’s” than “yesses” that they felt safe walking and biking. Most said that walking and bike facilities were inadequate. There were some suggestions as to how to improve the conditions. Activities reported on were mostly with regard to walking on the beach, then shopping and dining.

Pedestrian counts on the main part of the beach by the Seashell were in the 2700 – 3000 pedestrian range per hour, which Mr. Leedy said is a lot for a five foot sidewalk. However, once one gets past the Casino, there is no problem and traffic dissipates. It was determined there is a lot of traffic congestion which is caused by through traffic, but people looking for parking account for 15 – 20% of the recirculation traffic.

With regard to Ashworth Avenue, three alternatives were presented with section maps provided and were illustrated in the September 9<sup>th</sup> Memo from Mr. Leedy to Mr. Rose which the Commission received this evening.

Mr. Leedy reviewed the maps/charts noting that on Ocean Boulevard south there is a five foot sidewalk and eight foot striped loading area, which people use for walking. He also noted that at Haverhill Street and the playground, on street parking disappears. Alternatives included maintain two lanes and if Ashworth was to become two-way, two lanes were needed on Ocean Boulevard because of through traffic. Sidewalks need to be improved on Ocean Boulevard with ten to twelve feet of sidewalk to deal with pedestrian traffic.

On street parking may be eliminated in that section of ocean Boulevard that has two through lanes. There are sixty parking spaces on the street between Haverhill Street and the Chamber of Commerce. Some are for motorcycles. An option would be to recover some of those spaces. It was pointed out the 60 spaces bring in \$70,000 of revenue.

Another option would be to make Ocean Boulevard one lane with a bike lane, keep the parking, and improve the sidewalks. Sidewalk improvements are critical and would improve safety. Pedestrian safety is a real issue and if can reduce recirculation and the width that pedestrians need to cross, would be a big improvement. Streetscape improvements would also help.

From Ashworth to Boar’s Head, Mr. Leedy stated that one must think about how best to dedicate funding that might be available. An alternative to Ocean Boulevard South would be to provide one lane, one way with enhanced sidewalks and loading areas. Also, providing bike lanes while maintaining on-street parking. An alternative also discussed is that Ocean Boulevard would be turned over to beach people, taking through traffic out of the system. It may be complicated having Ashworth two way, but if two-way the demand is lower on Ocean Boulevard.

The intersection at Ocean Boulevard and Church Street is constraining and one cannot approve without taking property. This is a difficult situation. Mr. Leedy also spoke to having Highland Avenue two lanes, but this would also be difficult.

With regarding to parking: The state Park lot is underutilized; introduce a Trolley Service, modify parking rates, and more wayfinding signage. With regard to Urban Design: Utilize a consistent palate of street furnishings including benches, modern street lights, and trash barrels. A sidewalk/streetscape area on Ocean Boulevard is critical as are gateway enhancements to physically mark arrival and departure areas.

Mr. Nyhan stated that this presentation is meant to be carefully looked at, getting a feeling for the different alternatives presented. Further, to look at a date where public officials and the public can gather for comment. This is a starting point and in terms of alternatives, some may be customized and some mixed and match. There will be many steps of review.

### Comments/Questions:

- Looking at Ashworth Avenue as two lanes and adding extra cars would be a problem as want to have the tourists on Ocean Boulevard.
- The Ocean Boulevard sidewalks are bad, and the concern would be if Ocean Boulevard were lowered parking spots would be on a slant.
- The big picture is for Ocean Boulevard.
- Parking two way or one way on “alphabet streets” are for summer only? Mr Leedy said this is not an issue in that they are already one way and it seems to be working well.
- Look closely on the impact on A & B Streets.
- Mr. Leedy said there are 600 left turns at Church Street late in the afternoon; and there are 1100 vehicles traveling from Ashworth to the Bridge;
- Work to be done in front of the Ocean Wok. A fix there to clean up the movements. It is confusing there.
- Ashworth as two way would be difficult to work with as there are lots of driveways and lots of entrances. Loading would be a problem.
- Ocean Ave – smaller sidewalk except in front of the playground.
- Highland Avenue is not wide enough for two lanes with sidewalks and on-street parking
- There is desperate need of parking
- Suggestion of eliminating turning on to Church Street and put in a roundabout.
- Easy to see some of the concepts of Ocean Boulevard being one lane. A drastic change but if want to have bike and pedestrian safety, the only way to do it is to be drastic from what one is used to seeing.
- If Ashworth is to become two way, there would have to be conversation between the State and Town with regard to maintenance, etc.
- There are things that need to be done and it is best to get moving forward sooner rather than later

Mr. Watson said that there are opportunities for the Commission to get involved more than just draft the 10-year plan. VHB has done work to date; but, there are smaller scale works that need to be done.

Mr. Leedy stated that VHB is looking at improvements as a phased-type project. If the Town and State agreed that critical issues are the sidewalks on Ocean Boulevard, then there may be a future solution accommodated without dealing with traffic issues. Comprises may be required. Ocean Boulevard sidewalks are less than ½ of the overall improvement. This would be in the \$2 million range and would be an enhancement.

Mr. Nyhan reported that Tuesday evening, September 29, 2015 there is a Public Hearing by Governor’s Councilor Sununu on the 10-Year Transportation Plan. He stated we are in the plan now and have \$250,000 invested in the plan. Next week there may be another opportunity to build on the plan to receive more revenue. This should be a financial window of opportunity to start some of the projects. Mr. Nyhan would like input and recommendations from the Commission at this meeting on Tuesday. He said he would like to go into the meeting with something formal from the Commission. The Commissioners agreed. The Bill is part of the highway dollars the DOT gets each year. If the Commission goes into the meeting with a report of what the work has been done to date, Councilor Sununu may be willing to look at our projects and prioritizing. Mr. Nyhan, Mr. Watson, and Mr. Leedy will talk and come up with three priorities to take to the Tuesday meeting.

Mr. Charlie Preston, from the audience, stated that he agrees that Ashworth Avenue should not be two way and from Ashworth to the Ocean Wok there are 28 left hand turns plus driveways. If Ashworth were two-way, he said, there will be accidents.

Mr. Nyhan also stated that his major concern is when one turns the corner at Ocean Boulevard, Haverhill is the most dangerous to the Beach. Parking doesn’t have to be considered right now, but sidewalks and drainage do need discussion.

A PUBLIC MEETING has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at the Police Station Training Room – 7:00 pm to review with the public what has been presented this evening.

## **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT.**

### **1. Initial discussion on 2017 NH Capital Budget Request – South Beach State Park**

Mr. Nyhan stated this is a starting point and he would like to start the process of the HBAC and State Parks to look into submitting a proposed to the 2017 H Capital Budget process. Further, to look at the feasibility of having additional funding for the South Beach entry projects which would include the South Beach State Park. He would like to have the HBAC start a process to look at what can be done to improve the entrance through the Capital Budget process. He stated this would involve other players including Tom Mansfield and Brian Watson to assist in coming up with a concept for a plan.

## **TREASURER’S REPORT: Mr. Housman**

Mr. Housman reported there is no change in the balance from March. The balance remains at \$16,499.43.

**MOTION: It was Moved by Mr. Watson, Seconded by Mr. Preston and Voted unanimously to approve the payment of the \$4000 donation from the HBAC to allow for police details to police the crosswalks at identified streets during the day and evening hours in 12-hour shifts for the weekends during the month of August. (50%) of the cost. (As voted at the July 24, 2015 meeting)**

**MOTION: It was Moved by Mr. Merrill, Seconded by Mr. Reniere and Voted unanimously to approve the payment of \$610. To the town of Hampton for the Administrative Services Invoice.**

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **1. HBAC/HPD Traffic Flow Pilot Project results**

Mr. Nyhan spoke of the above vote for the final donation approval in the amount of \$4000 acceptance in – kind contribution from the HPD toward the HBAC Transportation Grant. (See above motion and vote.)

Mr. Nyhan spoke about the HBA/HPD Traffic Flow Pilot Project. Chief Sawyer wrote a letter to the Commission thanking the HBAC for its support in this project. The Chief spoke to the population comments saying how remarkable the traffic and people were flowing while the project was in effect on the weekends in August. This, he said was productive and give a good indication how traffic/pedestrian control have to go hand in hand in order for the traffic to flow. The Chief would like to continue the program going into next summer. Mr Nyhan stated the Commission was able to get the \$4000 in kind which will be put toward the total grant.

### **2. Update: South Beach entrance way – new creative ideas on improving the look. Plan of action. Notes of the July 24, 2015 meeting were provided to the Commission.**

Mr. Nyhan gave a brief review of how the South Beach entrance way could be improved. There are many individuals involved in this project and they discussed issues and items that could be addressed right way. Tier 2 items would require some funding and there are other items that would require Grant money. The group will reconvene in October and a work plan will be put together in order to look at issues going into the Spring of 2016. DRED and DOT are major areas of concern and the recommendations are as follow:

1. Will require someone from DOT to review the crosswalk, curbing and handicapped accessibility.
2. DRED and DOT. Would it be possible to take land from the State Park to create a turning lane into the Park, which will moved traffic along more efficiently. This would move traffic into the Park and allow other vehicles to move straight on. Mr. Nyhan commented that he would like to have a conversation with DOT and DRED to find out how this could be accomplished.

Mr. Preston said that a turning lane would help to speed up the ticketing booth. He also commented that the entrance looks nice with the changes that have been made. Further, the crosswalk is a good concept; although the Port Authority does not like the idea of people crossing there. He asked if it would be possible to get people to walk a little further to cross. Mr Nyhan said this would be worth examining.

Mr. Nyhan stated that, as noted in the May Minutes, he requested Mr. Rose to provide a cost for a change order in order to take a look at Ocean Boulevard from Boar's Head to Winnacunnet Rd and High Street. He stated he has not receive a response and, further, that this area needs review and cannot be ignored. It is part of the Master Plan and would like to see it included as, for example, in a Phase II.

Mr. Nyhan spoke of the Sea Wall Dedication which was held on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. He commented it was a good day, co-sponsored by the HBAC and the State Parks.

#### **NEW BUSINESS.**

1. **Acceptance of the 2015-2016 Meeting Calendar.** Mr. Nyhan provided the calendar to the Commissioners, a copy of which is posted on the Town Hall bulletin board.
2. **Fall commission appointments.** Mr. Nyhan reported there will be three appointments for renewal at the October 22, 2015 Meeting. The three include Mr. Nyhan, Town of Hampton; Mr. Reniere, HBVD; and Mr. Merrill, Citizen at Large.  
All have indicated they would like to be reappointed. Mr. Preston spoke of Mr. Merrill's service to the Commission and will move to reappoint him at the October meeting. Mr. Nyhan will request re-appointment by the Board of Selectmen, and Mr. Reniere will seek reappointment through the HBVD.

Mr. Nyhan reported that the NH Ten Year Transportation Plan – Regional Meeting will be held on 9/29/15 at the Seashell. He encouraged attendance. See above.

3. **Other new business. There was no other new business.**

**\*\*\* The next meeting of the HBAC will be held on Thursday, October 22, 2015**

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion: Mr. Preston moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.**

**Second: Mr. McMahon**

**Vote: 9 in favor, 0 opposed,**

**MOTION PASSED**

**Respectfully Submitted:**

**Anne Marchand, Secretary**

**Thank you Channel 22**

